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27 February 1990

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: El Salvador: Update #3 on Jesuit Killings

1. The investigation and preparation of the government's case against nine Army personnel charged with the murders continued, but there were few new developments. The government's Special Investigations Unit (SIU) has requested that the Army High Command order those senior officers who attended a meeting at the National Intelligence Directorate early on 16 November to be available for interrogation. In addition, a possible witness--a man who claims to have been in the night watchman's house near the Jesuit residence on the night of the murders--has been in contact with [REDACTED] and as of 16 February was writing down his recollections. [REDACTED]

2. The SIU briefed ten presidents of US Jesuit universities, as well as the CODEL led by Congressman Moakley, on the investigation. All appeared satisfied with the SIU's professionalism, although the CODEL suggested that SIU chief Lieutenant Colonel Rivas be polygraphed to "clear the air" of any allegations of a cover-up. [REDACTED] Colonel Benavides confessed in private to Rivas to having ordered the murders. [REDACTED]

3. Except for one deserter, the Army personnel charged in the case remain in military custody. According to Salvadoran law, they must be cashiered from the military before they can be turned over to civilian authorities. [REDACTED] Colonel Benavides is living in comfortable quarters and frequently entertains colleagues who visit to discuss the case. Benavides also allegedly has been permitted to travel to a coastal resort owned by the armed forces. [REDACTED]

Approved for Release
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